

01419

1963/09/23

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

1 as in Jim file

September 23, 1963

SECRET EYES ONLY

MEMORANDUM FOR MEMBERS OF THE SPECIAL GROUP

SUBJECT: Covert Operations Against Cuba - Security Within the Government

As you know, in August the U. S. Government directed two "exile" raids against targets in Cuba. From the evidence now available, it appears that our security, with respect to U. S. participation in these operations, was excellent.

While there will always be public speculation as to the extent of U. S. involvement in raids of this type, I think we would all agree readily that it is important that there be only speculation, and no direct knowledge. Unfortunately, the maintenance of a high degree of security is not a simple matter in view of the numbers of people within the Government who have to know a little or much about a U. S. -directed raid against Cuba. For example, without counting CIA personnel and secretarial and staff personnel of other agencies, there were probably over 20 people in the Executive Branch who knew details of the August raids while many other people were generally acquainted with the U. S. involvement. Among others, the Navy knew where the attack boats were going; the Coast Guard, Customs, and INS knew about the "comings and goings" of the raiders; a few DOD people, who had to procure special equipment for the raids, could presumably surmise that something was going on somewhere; and a few intelligence watch officers and press officers were told, for their background, that the U. S. Government was aware of the raids.

I think there are two important, if obvious, security lessons we have learned from the August raids -- one, that it is in the nature of the problem that many people probably have to know something about such raids; and two, that these people apparently

SECRET - EYES ONLY

(page 1 of 2 pages)

September 23, 1963

can maintain adequate security. At the same time, in view of the truth that security leaks are more likely to occur when substantial numbers of persons are involved, it seems essential to me that we constantly convey the high importance of security to others who are privy to information about our covert activities against Cuba. May I ask that members of the Special Group take such steps within their areas of authority as they think appropriate, and may I in particular urge that the Central Intelligence Agency, as executive agent for these enterprises, emphasize the importance of security to all those with whom it has necessary business on these matters, so that we can maintain the high level of security set in these recent operations.

McGeorge Bundy

McGeorge Bundy